

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 49-57 without prejudice and without dedication or abandonment of the subject matter thereof. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Claims 1-19 (Canceled).

Claim 20. (Previously presented) In a vehicle manufacturing method involving press-forming panel parts from a sheet metal and welding the panel parts together to form an automobile body, the method comprising the steps of:

painting the automobile body so that the automobile is paint-finished;

assembling an engine and functional parts into the paint-finished automobile body to thereby produce an assembled automobile; and

after the automobile is completely manufactured, performing a final inspection of the assembled automobile,

wherein the method further includes, between the painting and the assembling steps,

pretreating the paint-finished automobile body, including substeps of washing the paint-finished automobile body and dehydrating the paint-finished automobile body;

coating a strippable paint on an exterior painted surface of the paint-finished automobile body;

a step for partially drying said strippable paint applied to the exterior painted surface of the paint-finished automobile body so as to promote the drying of the strippable paint from the inside thereof;

a step for finally drying the automobile body to uniformly dry the entire strippable paint

applied to the exterior painted surface of the automobile body to thereby form a protective film on the painted surface; and

at least the assembling step and the final inspection step are carried out while the protective film of the strippable paint remains coated on the painted surface of the paint-finished automobile body.

Claims 21-26 (Canceled).

Claim 27. (Previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein said partially drying involves use of a first drying means; and

said finally drying involves use of a second drying means.

Claims 28-29 (Canceled).

Claim 30. (Previously presented) The method of claim 27, wherein said step of partially drying said strippable paint uses infrared radiation from said first drying means and said step of finally drying said strippable paint uses hot air from said second drying means.

Claim 31. (Previously presented) The method of claim 27, further including the step of stabilizing the strippable paint after it is coated on said product and prior to said preliminary drying step.

Claim 32. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein said stabilizing step is performed

at room temperature.

Claim 33. (Previously presented) The method of claim 27, wherein said partially and finally drying steps are performed at elevated temperatures.

Claims 34-36 (Canceled).

Claim 37. (Previously presented) The method of claim 32, wherein said partially and finally drying steps are performed at elevated temperatures.

Claim 38. (Previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein said strippable paint is water based.

Claim 39. (Previously presented) The method of claim 27, wherein said strippable paint is water based.

Claim 40. (Previously amended) The method of claim 31, wherein said stabilizing step is performed at an ambient temperature of 15-30 °C and an ambient humidity of 50-80%.

Claim 41 - 42. Cancelled

Claim 43. (Previously presented) The method of claim 31, wherein said strippable paint is water soluble and said stabilizing step is performed by allowing the automobile to stand for a

sufficiently long time at an ambient temperature of 15–30 °C and an ambient humidity of 50–80% after application of the peelable paint before said preliminary drying step.

Claim 44. Cancelled

Claim 45. (Previously presented) The method of claim 20, further including the step of shipping the manufactured vehicle after the final inspection step, wherein said shipping is also carried out while the protective film of the strippable paint remains coated on the assembled automobile body.

Claim 46. Cancelled

Claim 47. (Previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein said strippable paint coating step involves painting said strippable paint on multiple surfaces of the paint-finished automobile body to thereby form a protective film on the painted surfaces.

Claim 48. (Previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein said strippable paint coating step involves painting said strippable paint on all exterior surfaces of the paint-finished automobile body to thereby form a protective film on the painted surfaces.

Claims 49-57 (Cancelled).